United Nations A/AC.183/SR.338

General Assembly

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9 February 2012

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Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

Summary record of the 338th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Thursday, 15 December 2011, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Diallo ..... (Senegal)

Contents

Adoption of the agenda

Update on developments since the previous meeting of the Committee

The situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and developments in the political process

Request by Saudi Arabia to become an observer

United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People, to be held in Cairo on 6 and 7 February 2012

Other matters

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11-64218 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

1. *The agenda was adopted*

Update on developments since the previous meeting of the Committee

2. **The Chairman** said that since the previous meeting of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Robert Serry, had given a briefing before the Security Council, in which he had stressed the need for urgent political progress between Israel and the Palestinians through renewed negotiations in a conducive environment. He had said that without a credible political path forward, accompanied by more far-reaching steps on the ground, the viability of the Palestinian Authority and the two-State solution itself could not be taken for granted.

3. Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal had met in Cairo on 24 November to advance reconciliation between the two major Palestinian factions. They had agreed to prepare for general elections to be held in May 2012.

4. On 29 November, the international community had observed the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. The Committee had held a special meeting in New York, and similar meetings had been held in Geneva and Vienna.

5. On 30 November, the Israeli cabinet had taken a decision to release 100 million dollars in Palestinian tax revenues that had been illegally withheld since October. On the same day, the General Assembly had concluded its debate on the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East and adopted the resolutions submitted by the Committee renewing the mandates of the Committee, the Division for Palestinian Rights and the Department of Public Information, as well as the main political resolution on the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine.

6. On 8 December, an Israeli air strike near a crowded park in downtown Gaza City had killed two suspected members of an armed Palestinian group, triggering renewed rocket and mortar fire from Gaza into Israel. In subsequent Israeli air strikes, a father and his twelve-year-old son had been killed, and many other civilians, including children, had been wounded.

7. On 13 December, the Palestinian flag had been hoisted for the first time above the headquarters of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Paris, as the Palestinian anthem played and President Abbas looked on. On the same day, a coalition of 20 international human rights and aid organizations had reported that Israeli demolition of homes in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem had displaced more than 1,000 Palestinians in 2011, or twice as many as in 2010. Since the beginning of the year, more than 500 Palestinian homes, wells, rainwater cisterns and other essential structures had been destroyed in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

8. Since the Committee's previous meeting on 18 November, the Israeli authorities had continued to approve new houses and homes in settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. They had approved 100 homes in the West Bank settlement of Shilo, 41 permanent houses in Efrat near Bethlehem and a new Jewish enclave consisting of 14 homes in a Palestinian neighbourhood in East Jerusalem. The municipal authorities of Jerusalem had announced plans to declare an area at Mount Scopus a national park, thereby blocking the development of Palestinian neighbourhoods in East Jerusalem. There were incidents of settler violence in the West Bank and East Jerusalem almost every day, many leading to serious confrontations with the Palestinian inhabitants.

The situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and developments in the political process

9. **Ms. Seward** (Strategic Communications Division, Department of Public Information) said that the highlight of the 2011 observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People had been the launch of the new version of the United Nations exhibit on the question of Palestine. The revised exhibit included updated information and new graphic elements, as well as an accompanying video and a timeline on the question of Palestine and the role of the United Nations in addressing the issue. The exhibit was on the third floor of the General Assembly building. A reproduction of the exhibit in French had been unveiled at the Palais des Nations in Geneva one day before the International Day of

Solidarity. United Nations information centres around the world had had the exhibit translated into many different languages, using funds provided by the Committee.

10. Commemorative events had included: an exhibit, produced in collaboration with the representative of Palestine to Indonesia and the Faculty of Law at Atma Jaya Catholic University; in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, a recitation by a local poet of renown expressing solidarity with the Palestinian people; an event at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations with the participation of representatives of the Russian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Embassy of Palestine and ambassadors of African and Asian States; and in Pretoria, South Africa, a panel discussion and a reproduction of the exhibit, with 150 representatives of Government, civil society and academia in attendance.

11. **Mr Mansour** (Observer for Palestine) said that following the historic speech of President Abbas in the General Assembly and in the light of efforts towards full membership in the United Nations, the International Day of Solidarity had been a particularly festive occasion. In the words of President Abbas, the raising of the Palestinian flag before the UNESCO building in Paris had been a historic and moving event, marking the first time the Palestinian flag had been flown in front of a United Nations building.

12. Crimes committed by the Israelis against the Palestinians were documented on a weekly basis. As a result of the admission of Palestine to membership of UNESCO, Israel had unleashed a series of punitive, collective actions against Palestinians, including acceleration and intensification of its illegal settlement activities. Five letters had been sent to the Security Council documenting those illegal activities, which had been carried out tin violation of international law and Israel's obligations under the road map. The letters were official documents of the United Nations containing all the details of crimes committed in occupied East Jerusalem, the occupied West Bank and the occupied Gaza Strip, including the number of civilians killed and the continuing, illegal and inhumane blockade of the Gaza Strip. The international community had demanded that the blockade be lifted to permit reconstruction following the devastation resulting from the aggression against the Palestinians three years earlier.

13. Consultations with the President and members of the Security Council and with the non-aligned caucus in the Council had begun in the last few days with a view to encouraging the Council to shoulder its responsibility and pressure Israel to cease its provocative illegal escalation in all areas, including illegal settlement activities. The Security Council should muster the political will to act in accordance with its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security. Perhaps by the next monthly session on the situation in the Middle East and the Occupied Palestinian Territory the following week, the Security Council would be in a position to react appropriately and put a halt to Israel's continuing crimes, in accordance with its Charter obligation to maintain international peace and security.

14. Despite 50 days of deliberations, the Committee on the Admission of New Members had not reached a consensus on the Palestinian application for full membership in the United Nations. While a clear majority supported admission, one member of the Committee was openly opposed and a number of others supported the thrust of the application but had questions about the timing.

15. The next steps to be taken, such as joining other United Nations bodies and adhering to conventions and instruments of international law, were being considered. President Abbas had been in Paris, Brussels and London for consultations on next steps, and would be visiting other capitals in Europe and elsewhere as part of that process.

16. The Quartet had just issued a statement calling upon both parties to the Middle East conflict to refrain from provocations. For the Palestinian side, that statement referred only to actions by Israel, as the Palestinians were not involved in any provocations. While Israel was engaged in building illegal settlements and killing civilians in the Gaza Strip, the Palestinian Authority had applied to join UNESCO based on its legal and historic right to do so. Its application had been overwhelmingly supported by the member States. The Quartet had solicited proposals on border issues and security from both sides. The Palestinian Authority had submitted proposals, while Israel had yet to do so.

Request by Saudi Arabia to become an observer

17. **The Chairman** said that in a letter dated 9 December 2011, addressed to the Chairman of the Committee, the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia had expressed his country's desire to become an observer in the Committee. If he heard no objection, he

would take it that the Committee wished to approve the request of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to become an observer in the Committee.

18. *It was so decided.*

19. **Mr. Oyaidi** (Observer for Saudi Arabia) thanked the Committee for accepting his country's request to become an observer in the Committee.

20. Since the establishment of the Committee in 1975, his delegation had followed its efforts to defend the legitimate rights of the Palestinians and especially their right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent State with East Jerusalem as its capital, in implementation of the relevant resolutions. The intransigence of the occupying force, failure to implement United Nations resolutions, especially Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the decision of the occupying force to continue ignoring international denunciation for preventing the Palestinians from exercising their basic rights made the participation of countries and people and expressions of solidarity with the Palestinian people even more important. The situation had negative repercussions not only on the people, but also on the region of the Middle East in general.

21. His country's objective in becoming an observer was to continue supporting the work of the Committee to achieve a just peace based on the rules of international law. The work of the Committee was to be commended and should continue until the Palestinian people was able to exercise all of its inalienable natural and legitimate rights, including the right to return within the limits of the Palestinian State as recommended by the United Nations on the basis of 1967 borders.

22. **Mr. Mansour** (Observer for Palestine) congratulated Saudi Arabia for joining the Committee as an observer. Its presence would enrich the work of the Committee.

United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People, to be held in Cairo on 6 and 7 February 2012

23. **The Chairman** said that the provisional programme of the United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People was contained in working paper No. 7, which had been distributed by the Secretariat. The theme of the Seminar would be the economic cost of continued Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territory, and local, regional and international efforts towards mitigating it.

24. In organizing the annual event, the Committee wished to draw attention to the fact that the Israeli occupation was the primary obstacle to socio-economic development in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Experts at the Seminar would assess the cost of the occupation and its impact on the socio-economic situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. It would highlight the efforts of the Palestinian Authority, supported by the international community, to prepare for independence, sovereignty and sustainable development.

25. Invitations to the Seminar would be sent to internationally renowned experts on the issue, States Members of the United Nations, observers at the United Nations, parliamentarians, representatives of organizations in the United Nations system and of other intergovernmental organizations, representatives of civil society and members of the media.

26. **Mr. Aljowaily** (Egypt) said that Egypt was pleased to host the Seminar in Cairo in February, 2012. Preparations were under way to facilitate the successful holding of the Seminar. The Egyptian delegation in New York stood ready to engage in all preparations and work with the Secretariat of the United Nations under the auspices of the Chairman of the Committee.

27. **The Chairman** said that if there were no objections, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the provisional programme for the Seminar contained in working paper No. 7.

28. *It was so decided.*

Other matters

29. **The Chairman** said that the Division for Palestinian Rights would host a briefing by the Norwegian Refugee Council on legal issues related to housing, land and property in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. It would be held in mid-January and would focus on such issues as the Israeli legal system, restrictive zoning and planning, settlements, the application of international law and challenges in the legal system.

The meeting rose at 4 p.m.

United Nations A/AC.183/SR.339

General Assembly

Distr.: General
8 March 2012

Original: English

Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

Summary record of the 339th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 13 February 2012, at 3.15 p.m.

Temporary Chair: Mr. Ban Ki-Moon ..... (Secretary-General)
Chair: Mr. Diallo ..... (Senegal)

Contents

Adoption of the agenda

Election of officers

Statement by the Secretary-General

Update on developments since the previous meeting of the Committee

Draft programme of work of the Committee

Request by Ecuador to become a member of the Committee

Report of the Chair on the United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People, held in Cairo, Egypt, on 6 and 7 February 2012

United Nations International Meeting on the Question of Palestine to be held at the United Nations Office at Geneva on 3 and 4 April 2012

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12-23233 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda (A/AC.183/2012/L.1)

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

Election of officers

2. **The Temporary Chair** invited the Committee to consider nominations for the posts of Chair, Vice-Chairs and Rapporteur of the Committee.

3. **Mr. Daou** (Mali) nominated Mr. Diallo (Senegal) for re-election to the office of Chair, Mr. Tanin (Afghanistan) and Mr. Núñez Mosquera (Cuba) for re-election as the two Vice-Chairs, and Mr. Grima (Malta) for election to the office of Rapporteur.

4. **Mr. Mashabane** (South Africa) seconded the nominations.

5. *Mr. Diallo (Senegal), Mr. Tanin (Afghanistan), Mr. Núñez Mosquera (Cuba) and Mr. Grima (Malta) were elected by acclamation.*

6. *Mr. Diallo (Senegal) took the Chair.*

Statement by the Secretary-General

7. The Secretary-General said that he had recently returned from Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, where he had encouraged both parties to re-engage in earnest towards the resumption of permanent status negotiations. Having vowed to spare no effort to help Israelis and Palestinians arrive at a new and better future, he remained hopeful that the start of direct contacts, facilitated by King Abdullah of Jordan, within the framework of the Diplomatic Quartet on the Middle East, could pave the way for serious negotiations towards an agreement on a two-State solution.

8. Concrete steps were required to restore confidence and trust on the ground. The parties had a particular responsibility to cease provocations and create an environment conducive to direct talks. Israel's continued settlement activity was a major obstacle and prejudiced final status issues. Settlement activity must cease, as it was contrary to international law and to the road map to Mideast peace. Unilateral actions on the ground would not be accepted by the international community. The increase in settler violence was also troubling. He continued to follow with concern the situation of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails and the use of administrative detentions, including prolonged detentions without charges.

9. For its part, the Palestinian Authority should also find ways to de-escalate the situation, improve the divisive climate, including by combating incitement, and engage directly in the search for a negotiated solution. During his visit he had been encouraged by the impressive development of institutions fundamental to the functioning of a future Palestinian State. Noting the need to build on that progress and expand the reach of those institutions, he called on the donor community to continue to assist that important process, especially when those gains were at risk due to the persistence of the conflict, fiscal challenges facing the Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian divide.

10. The United Nations had consistently supported Palestinian reconciliation within the framework of the commitments of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the Quartet principles and the Arab Peace Initiative, and under the leadership of President Mahmoud Abbas. Palestinian reconciliation and negotiations did not have to be mutually exclusive.

11. The humanitarian situation in Gaza remained a priority for the United Nations. Ordinary Gazans deserved better living conditions and freer movement. He reiterated his call for immediate steps towards ending the closure of the Gaza Strip in line with Security Council resolution 1860 (2009). The full opening of legitimate crossings for the import of construction materials was critical for Gaza's economic recovery and would enable badly needed reconstruction activities. Exports, a critical component of any economy, should be allowed to resume at scale, including transfers to the West Bank and Israel. Those policy changes could be implemented with due consideration for Israel's legitimate security concerns, while making a significant difference in the lives of ordinary Gazans.

12. Reiterating his condemnation of the firing of rockets from the Gaza Strip into Israel, he called on militants to stop their indiscriminate attacks against Israeli civilians. At the same time, Israel must show maximum restraint, and all must respect international humanitarian law.

13. All efforts must be made to effect a positive change, as the status quo was unsustainable. The parties should do their utmost to resolve all permanent status issues, end the conflict and establish an

independent, democratic, contiguous and viable Palestinian State living side by side with a secure Israel, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, the Madrid framework, previous agreements, the Road Map and the Arab Peace Initiative. It was time to realize the legitimate rights and aspirations of the peoples of Palestine and Israel. For his part, he would continue to do everything in his power to help the parties achieve that goal, and encouraged the Committee to do likewise.

14. **The Chair**, speaking as the representative of Senegal, said that over the previous year, Palestine's application for admission to the United Nations as a Member State had defined the question of Palestine. Senegal had firmly supported Palestine's legitimate request, reaffirming its stand in favour of the recognition of an independent and sovereign State of Palestine within the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital and coexisting peacefully alongside the State of Israel, within secure and internationally recognized borders. An overwhelming majority of Member States endorsed that position. His Government also welcomed Palestine's admission to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the parallel liberation of Palestinian political prisoners and Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit. In light of those positive advances, he urged the Israeli Government to remove obstacles to the resumption of negotiations by halting settlement and other illegal activities aimed at altering the historical, demographic and cultural realities of the occupied territories, including the multi-confessional heritage of the holy city of Jerusalem. Insistence on pursuing settlement activity stripped the peace negotiations of an essential element by jeopardizing the territorial viability of the future State of Palestine.

15. The Quartet must fully assume its responsibility as facilitator of peace talks, with a view to resolving the decades-old conflict in a just and satisfactory manner. The ideals of liberating the war-torn Middle East from fear and violence and restoring its status as a holy land of hope for the three revealed religions were non-negotiable and essential to maintaining international peace and security. In closing, he expressed confidence in the renewed engagement of the Committee in fulfilling its mandate and implementing all relevant United Nations resolutions.

16. **Mr. Mansour** (Observer for Palestine) said that his delegation appreciated the principled positions of the Secretary-General on many issues, including the illegality of settlements, the inclusion of Jerusalem as a final status issue and the need to end the 1967 occupation in order to allow the establishment of an independent State of Palestine. He also hailed the Secretary-General's recent visit to the Gaza Strip as a concrete demonstration of his commitment to lifting the blockade on the territory. All such efforts to remove obstacles to peace constituted important contributions to facilitating the resumption of direct negotiations and increasing their chance of success. More frequent visits were necessary to draw international attention to the situation on the ground, most notably to Palestinian efforts to build the city of Rawabi and Israeli obstruction of the peace process through the construction of settlements and the separation wall. His delegation would continue to cooperate with the Secretary-General and the many agencies providing important services in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, especially the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). The Secretary-General's active support for the release of Palestinian political prisoners and for Palestine's application for membership in the United Nations would be remembered once the occupation had ended and Palestine had secured its independence, a milestone that was not far off.

Update on developments since the previous meeting of the Committee

17. **The Chair**, summarizing some of the activities and developments that had taken place since the Committee's previous meeting, said that Iceland had formally recognized the Palestinian State on 15 December 2011. On 18 December, the Israeli Housing Ministry had published tenders for 1,028 homes to be built in settlements in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. Also on 18 December, Israel had released about 550 Palestinian prisoners in the second half of the swap deal, and the United Nations Special Rapporteur for freedom of expression had concluded a mission to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, expressing concern at Israeli treatment of Palestinian demonstrators.

18. On 20 December, the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs had briefed the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East. On 22 December, Fatah and Hamas had reached a key agreement in Cairo to admit Hamas into the Palestine Liberation

Organization, and on 28 December, the Israeli authorities had approved the construction of 130 new settler homes in East Jerusalem.

19. On 3 January 2012, Israeli and Palestinian negotiators had held their first direct talks in 15 months in Amman. At least five rounds of preparatory meetings had since been held. Also on 3 January, the Israeli Housing Ministry and the Israel Lands Administration had published three new tenders for the construction of 300 settlement housing units in Jerusalem.

20. On 11 January, the Permanent Mission of Thailand had announced that its Government had officially recognized the State of Palestine and initiated the process to establish and formalize diplomatic relations with Palestine. On 18 January, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs had briefed the Security Council on the humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. On 23 January, the Council of the European Union had adopted conclusions on the Middle East peace process, calling on the parties to come forward with comprehensive proposals on borders and security. The following day, the Security Council had held an open debate on the situation in the Middle East, in which he had participated. From 24 to 26 January, the European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy had visited Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. On 27 January, the United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory had issued a statement calling for the immediate end to the demolition of Palestinian homes by the Israeli authorities in the West Bank. On 28 January, the European Union missions in Jerusalem and Ramallah had issued a statement expressing concern about the recent arrests of five Palestinian Legislative Council members by Israel.

21. On 1 and 2 February, the Secretary-General had visited Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory and called on the parties to take steps to build trust and ensure an environment conducive to sustained negotiations. Also on 1 February, the German Foreign Minister had announced during his visit to Ramallah that Germany had upgraded the Palestinian diplomatic representation in Berlin from a delegation to a mission headed by an ambassador. On 5 February, the president of the Palestinian Authority and the chief of the Hamas Political Bureau had agreed to form an interim Government during a meeting in Doha, Qatar. On 6 and 7 February, the Committee had convened the United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People in Cairo. On 8 February, the Advisory Board of the Special Human Settlements Programme for the Palestinian People, which was led by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT), had held its first meeting at United Nations Headquarters.

Draft programme of work of the Committee
(A/AC.183/2012/CRP.1)

22. **The Chair**, introducing the Committee's draft programme of work for 2012 (A/AC.183/2012/CRP.1), said that section I summarized the relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session, section II contained a brief outline of developments on the ground and the political process, and section III outlined the priority issues for 2012, which, inter alia, included the continuation of work towards heightening international awareness and dialogue regarding the various aspects of the question of Palestine and promoting international support for the rights of the Palestinian people and the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine. Section IV described the planned activities and events of the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights.

23. He would take it that the Committee wished to approve the draft programme of work.

24. *It was so decided.*

Request by Ecuador to become a member of the Committee

25. **The Chair**, with reference to a letter of 13 January 2012 from the Permanent Mission of Ecuador to the United Nations, said that he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the request by the Government of Ecuador to upgrade its status in the Committee from that of observer to full member.

26. *It was so decided.*

27. **Mr. Morejón** (Ecuador) said that his country was requesting admission as a full member of the Committee. On 24 December 2010, his Government had recognized the State of Palestine as a free, independent, and sovereign State within the 1967 borders, in accordance with Security Council resolution 242 (1967), the implementation of which

should be sought as vigorously as that of other Council resolutions.

28. Subsequently, on 31 October 2011, his Government had voted in favour of admitting Palestine as a Member State of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), with a view to overcoming decades of injustice and in defiance of the pressure and threats from some States which felt they had the right to impose their views on other countries in the conduct of their international relations.

29. Palestine's admission to UNESCO reaffirmed the historic right of Palestinians who had long been living on their territory and brought to light the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, which had recognized the existence of the Palestinian State since 1947. It existed irrespective of the good will of the Government of Israel, a decision by the United States of America, or of the continuous boycotting of negotiations by the occupying Power which aimed to expel the rightful owners through a campaign of illegal and illegitimate settlements.

30. Ecuador would continue to be firmly committed to finding a peaceful solution to all the problems affecting the Middle East, focusing in particular on negotiations relating to the legitimate right of the Palestinian people to establish their own nation State, with the same rights and obligations as any other member of the international community.

31. His Government reaffirmed the full validity of the agreements concluded between Palestine and Israel, including those based on the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, which had been and must continue to be based on the principle of land for peace, without allowing for pressure, threats or use of force, but focusing on the right of the people of Palestine and Israel to live together in peace and the obligation of both States to respect the borders established by the United Nations in 1967, which could not be modified unilaterally or on the basis of false realities or in the name of myths inspired by religion.

32. Ecuador had consistently supported international efforts to foster dialogue between Palestine and Israel, including through the Quartet; nonetheless, the Quartet must heed the legitimate demands to permanently suspend any Israeli settlement on Palestinian territory and halt the abuse and aggression of the occupying Power against Palestinian inhabitants in their own land.

33. **Ms. Vivas Mendoza** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that her delegation endorsed the statement made by the delegation of Ecuador, whose full membership in the Committee would enhance its effectiveness and productivity. Furthermore, it was also a source of pride that its membership would boost the representation of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States in the Committee, and give greater visibility to the cause of the Palestinian people in the Latin American and Caribbean region.

34. **Mr. Rosales Díaz** (Nicaragua) said that Ecuador's full membership in the Committee would add value to its work, and brought to light the strengthened and unwavering commitment of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America to the realization of the rights of the Palestinian people.

35. **Mr. Mansour** (Observer for Palestine) noted that Ecuador's full membership in the Committee would be a positive contribution to its work, recognizing also the active role Ecuador had played in the context of the quest to establish a two-thirds majority of countries recognizing the State of Palestine.

36. **The Chair** said that the Committee's decision to approve Ecuador's request for membership would be submitted for the approval of the General Assembly.

Report of the Chair on the United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People, held in Cairo, Egypt, on 6 and 7 February 2012

37. **Mr. Mansour** (Observer for Palestine) said that two papers presented at the seminar contained particularly valuable information to help strengthen Palestine's struggle for independence. The first paper estimated the cost of the Israeli occupation to the Palestinian economy at about $7 billion and the second paper at $9 billion annually. It would be useful to distribute those papers in CD-Rom form to United Nations Member States, as that research helped to illustrate that, were it not for the Israeli occupation, Palestine would not be a failed State but a vibrant economy which deserved to gain independence and become a full member of the United Nations.

38. **The Chair** said that he agreed that the information should be circulated to each Member State. He took it that the Committee wished to take note of the report.

39. *It was so decided.*

United Nations International Meeting on the Question of Palestine to be held at the United Nations Office at Geneva on 3 and 4 April 2012

40. **The Chair** drew attention to the provisional programme for the United Nations International Meeting on the Question of Palestine, on the theme of "the question of Palestinian political prisoners in Israeli prisons and detention facilities: legal and political implications", to be held at the United Nations Office at Geneva on 3 and 4 April 2012, as contained in working paper No. 1, which had been distributed by the Secretariat.

41. That event would help to further raise awareness of the situation and strengthen the determination of the international community to find a solution, namely through the speedy release and reintegration of Palestinian political prisoners into Palestinian society. It would also foster a discussion on the legal and humanitarian aspects of the arrests and detentions of Palestinians by the occupying Power and consider the status of Palestinian prisoners in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian political process, and on ways to strengthen the role of the wider international community, as well as non-governmental actors, in promoting a solution. That meeting would be followed, on 5 April, by consultations with civil society organizations. He took it that the Committee wished to approve the provisional programme.

42. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 4:35 p.m.